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ABSTRACT

The crucial importance of beginning-of-the-year activities in establishing good behavior patterns in the elementary classroom is asserted. Observations were made of two groups of teachers who were very different in management effectiveness throughout a school year. A number differences between the two groups' first- day and beginning-of-the-year activities were noted. Examples of the behavior of these teachers are presented with discussions on observed student reactive behaviors. It is concluded that effective classroom organization and management during the year can be predicted from the first several weeks of the school year. (JD)

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Effective Classroom Management at the Beginning of the School Year

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Effective Classroom Management at the Beginning of the School Year (1)

The influence of initial teaching activities upon the remainder of the year has long been assumed by educators, and is a part of the folklore of teaching. For example, Waller (2:301) observed, "It is axiomatic among school men that the first day of school, or the first meeting of a class, is all-important in determining the success or failure of the school year." And Bagley (3), in a book on management published

in 1907, gave considerable coverage to initial activities, including a series initial activites, including a series of prescriptive statements for the first day. However, only a few studies of beginning-of-year activities have been conducted. Tikunoff, Ward, and Dasho (4) reported case studies of three fourth grade teachers who were extensively observed during the first seven weeks of the school year. Their observations highlighted the central role of rule-setting during the initial weeks, teacher sanctioning behavior, and the socialization of the children to the teacher's system of rules and procedures. Moskowitz and Hayman (5) observed "best" and first year junior high school teachers in two inner-city schools. Best teachers used the first class day for orienting and climate setting, whereas new teachers tended to jump into content more quickly. Best teachers also dealt more with student feelings, had less off-task behavior, smiled and joked more, and talked more than new teachers on the first day.

Observations made later in the year caused the authors to conclude that the first day was crucial for setting the pattern for the year.

Additional support for the importance of beginning-of-year activities can be inferred from propositions offered by Brophy and Putnam (6) and Doyle (7). Brophy and Putnam stress the importance for classroom management of several features that are established early in the year, including the organization of instruction to promote student engagement, the prevention of problems, and the orchestration of various elements of management into a coherent system. Doyle proposes that teachers monitor pupils' behavior related to their cooperation level, or lack of deviance. Deviant pupil behaviors increase until the teacher takes some action, at which point they may decrease slightly. Doyle observes that once a high level of deviant pupil behavior is established, it does not revert to earlier, lower levels. Thus, we would predict that the beginning-of-year

activities are especially important for determining the level of pupil cooperation during the remainder of the year.

In spite of a clear practical and theoretical rationale for studying classroom processes at their inception, research on teaching typically has obtained cross-sectional samples of behavior at some point after the school year has begun, without observations of classrooms at the beginning of the year. In the area of classroom organization and management, in particular, the initial phase of the year should be of paramount importance.

How to begin the year is a question that all teachers have considered. A major goal of the project reported here was to identify how teachers who are effective managers begin the year and to determine what basic principles of management underlie their teaching activities. The basic research strategy was to conduct extensive observational studies of classrooms during the first week of school and to continue

throughout the year. Then, using several criteria for effective management obtained after the beginning of the year, teachers were classified and subsamples of more and less effective managers were selected. Narrative records and other descriptive data obtained during the first three weeks were then used to contrast the initial organization and management characteristics of the two groups of teachers.

The nature of the data is descriptive-correlational, rather than experimental. What we will describe are antecedent events which were associated with year-long managment effectiveness. Thus, although many of the results may suggest causal links, experimental work along with further correlational evidence is needed to extend the findings and to support causal inferences.

Methods

In order to study the initial phase of classroom organization and management, it was necessary to be in classrooms when schol began. Consequently,

27 third-grade teachers* in eight elementary schools were recruited into a beginning-of-year observational study. Only a few of the teachers in the eight schools chose not to participate; generally, the nonparticipants were new teachers. However, the final sample did include six first-year teachers. Four of the eight schools were Title I schools, the remaining four were "near" Title I schools. The ethnic/racial composition of pupil populations in five of the schools was a mixture of Anglo and minority pupils; in one other school most of the children were Black; in the two remaining schools most of the

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*Initially, all the teachers were to have taught third-grade classes, but two teachers were shifted, one to a second grade class and one to a fourth grade class. They were left in the final sample. Two other teachers who were observed during the first three weeks took leaves-of-absence during the first half of the school year; data from their observations are not included here.

children were Mexican-American.

Observers were trained to gather several types of information. The chief source of information about organization and management practices was the Classroom Narrative Record, consisting of specimen records written by observers during each classroom visit. Each observer recorded, in narrative form, as much information as possible about observed classroom processes. Guidelines for observers focused them on many classroom processes and characteristics including room arrangement, materials, assignments, introductions, classroom rules, consequences of misbehavior, initiation of activities, transitions, delays, student reactions, grouping patterns, the nature of individual work and organizational procedures, desired student activities, problems, response to inappropriate behavior, consistency of teacher responses, systems for contacting students, procedures for various teacher and pupil activities, the nature of group work, monitoring, feedback systems, reward and

punishment systems, and teacher cues. Observers recorded their written narratives onto a form that also allowed the recording of the class activity, grouping, and content format at all stages of the narrative.

Another source of information about classroom processes was the Student Engagement Rating (SER). At 15-minute intervals the observer counted the number of students who were on-task or off-task, and noted the subject and activity, thus permitting the assessment of student engagement rates during various formats. A series of ratings, called the Component Ratings, consisted of 34 rated variables and checklist items. It was used at the end of each observation to record observer judgments about particular aspects of the teacher's instruction or behavior management. The component ratings can be used for comparisons between groups. A higher average rating on a variable for some group means that the rated characterisitcs or behavior was observed more frequently or judged as more

adequately performed by that group of teachers.

Observations were begun at 8 a.m. on the first day of school in 12 of the classrooms, and all teachers were observed at least once during the first two days. During the first three weeks each teacher was observed on eight to ten occasions. Typically, a morning observation began at the start of the school day, and lasted until the beginning of the lunch break. Afternoon observations began after the lunch break, and continued until the close of the school day. A majority of the observations were made in the morning, but each teacher was observed several times in the afternoon. Each teacher was seen separately by two observers.

Observations were resumed in November, but on a reduced scale. For the remainder of the year, each teacher was observed once every three weeks by observers who were different in most cases from those who observed the teacher during the initial three weeks. At the end of the school year, observers

made a number of summary ratings of selected teacher characteristics and of other instructional variables. Teachers were interviewed twice, in October and at the end of the year, to acquire information about planning and other unobservable characteristics.

Preliminary Treatment of the Data

Before using the data to describe the characteristics of effective classroom management, several steps were taken. These included reliability checks on the data sets, preparation of narrative record summaries, and selection of subgroups of teachers.

Observer agreement on the Component Ratings was estimated in several ways, including intraclass correlations between observer pairs on each scale during the first three weeks' observations, during the remainder-of-year observations, and correlations between the average ratings from the two time periods. Scales were retained for subsequent analysis only if they showed adequate observer agreement, i.e., a statistically significant intraclass

correlation ($p < .05$) or, in the case of marginal agreement, if the correlation between average ratings during the two time periods was significant ($p < .05$), the latter case indicating stable measurement of the rated characterisitc over time. Of the original 34 variables, 25 were retained.

Student Engagement Ratings (SER's) were obtained every 15 minutes during all observations. A frequency tally was made of the number of students engaged in academic, procedural, or off-task activities. Each variable was expressed as the percent of students who were classified in each category. To check reliability the SER's were listed sequentially and separated into two sets, in odd-even fashion. Each SER variable was then estimated from each set by averaging across the remainder-of-year observations. Reliabilities were estimated by correlating these split-half averages, and applying the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula to estimate the reliability of the combined sets of observations. The estimated

reliability of the engagement rate in all content activities was .85; in reading/language arts activities only, the reliability was .86. The reliability of on-task, academic activities, was .71 for all content areas, and .76 for reading/language arts alone. The reliability of off-task (unsanctioned) behavior was .91 for all content, and .89 for reading/language arts alone. Thus the engagement rates were highly reliable.

The narrative descriptions of each teacher/class were in specimen record form and quite lengthy, ranging from 4-5 pages for a brief observation to more than 20 pages for a long observation. These were reduced by three readers, who prepared narrative summaries organized around several areas: behavior control, instructional management, meeting student concerns, physical arrangements, constraints on the teacher, and personal characteristics. Each area was divided into subparts, and the readers worked together on several summaries until adequate agreement was reached on the

nature of the information to include in the summaries. Narrative records were then divided into two sets: first three weeks and remainder-of-year. No reader was responsible for both the initial summary and remainder-of-year summary for a teacher.

In addition to preparing a summary, each reader also rated the teacher's adequacy in each of the areas: controlling behavior, instructional management, meeting student concerns, physical arrangement, and constraints. The latter was given a dual rating: the severity of the constraints faced by the teacher, and the degree to which the teacher was able to cope with them. Initial checks among the readers indicated that these characteristics could be reliably rated based upon reading the narrative records. This provided some assurance that the narratives could be used to characterize the organizational and management behaviors of the teachers.

An analysis of the stability of beginning vs. remainder-of-year

management effectiveness was conducted using the narrative summary ratings of management characteristics and the student engagement ratings. Correlations between beginning-of-year ratings and remainder-of-year ratings are shown in Table 1 for on-task pupil behavior and for the teacher variables taken from the narrative records. The correlations are all significant ($p < .05$) and generally moderate to high. It should be noted however, that the narrative Variables 1, 2, 3, and 6 are highly intercorrelated. This may reflect actual interdependence; for example, good behavioral managers are also good instructional managers. It may also reflect halo on the part of the readers. Thus, although we will continue to distinguish conceptually between these management domains, the reader should realize that they are undoubtedly linked. Based upon the stability analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that the management characteristics of the teacher and the level of student task engagement during the school year

are at least moderately, and in some areas, highly predictable from the first three weeks' behavior.

At this stage of the data analysis, after having run reliability and stability checks, we felt that the data were sufficiently dependable to attempt to describe the management characteristics of the teachers. For that purpose, subsamples of teachers were selected.

Sample Selection

The goal of the subsample selection procedure was to identify two groups of teachers with initially comparable classes, but who were highly differentiated on their management effectiveness during the year. A three step process was used.

Step 1. Using the California Achievement Test reading score obtained by each child in April of the preceding year, class mean CAT scores were computed. Classes were ranked and divided into three groups. Selection of subsamples was restricted so that each subsample would be balanced according to entering CAT mean.

Step 2. Within each CAT level, teachers were ranked on three management effectiveness criteria obtained during the remainder-of-year data collection: (1) student engagement rates, (2) reader ratings using the average of the behavior control and instructional management variables, and (3) a management score derived from observer end-of-year ratings.

Step 3. Class mean residual gain on CAT reading was computed, using scores obtained during April of the study year regressed onto the previous year's scores. Although these are not an entirely valid indicator of teacher effects for several reasons (for example, in Title I schools, many pupils received reading instruction partly from their regular teacher and partly from a reading specialist), they were used as a check on the selection procedure in Step 2 to make certain that the samples of more effective managers and less effective managers were differentiated with respect to reading achievement.

The two selected subgroups each

consisted of seven teachers. The two groups were equivalent with respect to their initial class mean CAT reading scores. Also, the two groups were distributed evenly across schools, including the two Title I-non-Title I groups. On the other hand, the groups were different with respect to several measures of pupil and teacher behavior obtained during the remainder of the year. In the groups identified as having more effective managers, the average student engagement rates were higher and the amount of off-task behavior was lower during the November--May observations, the end-of-year observer management ratings were higher, and the average residual reading achievement was higher than in the groups of less effective managers' classes.

Comparisons of More and Less Effective Managers at the Beginning of the Year

The beginning-of-year activities of the more and less effective managers were compared statistically by t-tests of the narrative ratings of management areas, the student engagement and

off-task variables, and the instructional component ratings. These contrasts are shown in Table 2. Most of these contrasts were statistically significant, indicating clear differences on beginning-of-year management effectiveness and a number of instructional and behavioral components. In addition to the statistical treatment of the data, the narrative records from the first three weeks were analyzed according to each of the narrative management areas, in order to describe the activities and behaviors of the two groups of teachers. Numerous differences were apparent between the more and less effective managers. These differences are described below.

Discussion

In this section we will integrate the results of the statistical contrast of the two groups with the descriptive analysis of the narrative records. The presentation of results is organized around the narrative summary ratings of management areas.

Behavior management. The two groups of

teachers exhibited striking differences in initial behavior management activities. The differences were most apparent in the areas of classroom rules and procedures, monitoring of pupils, and the delivery of consequences.

Both groups of teachers had rules and procedures for their classes. What distinguished the more effective managers was the degree to which the rules and procedures were integrated into a workable system and how effectively the system was taught to the children. These teachers planned the first day so that they had maximum contact with and control over the children. Name tags and initial greetings were handled smoothly with no milling about. Children had interesting activities to work on, usually by themselves, once they were in their seats. Teachers stayed with the children, even when parents interrupted or the office called. As soon as most students had arrived, the teachers began describing rules and procedures. In some cases but not always, pupils were asked to suggest

rules. The rules and selected procedures were explained clearly, with examples and reasons. Not all procedures were discussed, only those which were needed for initial activities (e.g., bathroom, storage, pencil sharpener, water fountain). In other words, children were taught what they needed to know about using the room, but were not overloaded with information.

The better managers typically spent considerable time during the first week explaining and reminding students of the rules. Their pupils were not uniformly "ready" after the first day or two, and several of the teachers had relatively high amounts of off-task behavior initially. However, they taught the pupils to behave appropriately, through a variety of means. Some teachers used rehearsal of procedures, such as lining up. Other teachers used incentive systems to shape behavior. Most of the teachers taught the children to respond to specific signals, such as a bell or the teacher's call for attention. In this respect, on the component ratings,

more effective managers were rated higher in their use of a variety of rewards and in giving signals for appropriate behavior.

When the first "academic" activity was introduced, it was a simple, enjoyable one, such as drawing and coloring. The teacher did not attempt to group children, nor was there any hurry to get into workbooks or readers. The teacher stayed with the total class, monitored them closely, and gave them clear, specific directions. This mode of instruction continued for several days, usually. The teachers primarily worked with the total group, monitored closely, and introduced procedures and content gradually. If the teacher did individual assessment or had to leave the total group to perform a clerical or procedural task, there was always a specific assignment and the teacher continued to monitor their activities. If inappropriate behavior occurred, it was stopped quickly. Evidence for better monitoring behavior is found in the higher rating for eye contact for the more effective

managers. They were also rated as more likely to stop disruptive behavior quickly. During the first three weeks these teachers' classes exhibited a higher academic engagement rate and lower rates of off-task behavior. On the component ratings, the pupils were rated as engaging in less disruptive behavior. In many respects these teachers did not appear to handle disruptive behavior, when it occurred, differently than the less effective managers. For example, there are no significant differences in their rated responses to misbehavior for the use of time out, criticism, or punishment. "Ignoring" is marginally significant however, with more effective teachers rated as doing less ignoring. The major distinguishing characteristic of the more effective managers was that they monitored students carefully and when disruptive behavior occurred, they stopped it quickly.

In summary, the more effective managers clearly established themselves as the classroom leaders. They continued

to work on rules and procedures until the children learned them. The teaching of content was important for these teachers, but they stressed, initially, socialization into the classroom system. By the end of the first three weeks, these classes were ready for the rest of the year.

In contrast to the more effective managers, the poorer managers did not have well worked-out procedures. This was most evident in the behavior of the beginning teachers. For example, one new teacher had no procedures for using the bathroom, pencil sharpener, or the water fountain; the children seemed to come and go as they pleased. Consequently, children wandered about, enormously complicating the teacher's organizational tasks. Another new teacher rehearsed lining up and exiting for fire drills on the first day. An experienced but less effective teacher tried to use a bell as a signal, but allowed children to ignore it frequently. Another one tried instituting a system in which one bell

ring meant the children should stop talking and two rings meant "pay attention." Unfortunately the teacher merely explained the system, without rehearsing it. Furthermore, she added the "two rings" signal before the children had learned to respond correctly to one ring. In short, the poorer managers had not thought through very clearly the essential procedures to teach the children on the first days of school.

All of the poorer managers had rules, as did the better managers. However, there was a great difference in the way these were presented and followed up. In some cases the rules were vague ("Be in the right place at the right time.") and then not clarified. In other instances they were introduced casually without discussion, as though a single presentation to a class of third graders would be perfectly comprehended and retained. Thus, the teachers did not use rules as cues for appropriate behavior, and they did not teach the rules to the children.

The poorer managers were also ineffective monitors of their classes. In some cases, this was caused, in part, by their not having efficient procedures for routine pupil activites. When children are wandering around a room, it is difficult to keep tabs on all of them. In addition, however, many of these teachers simply busied themselves in some clerical task or ancillary activity early in the first week. For example, some teachers removed themselves from active surveillance of the whole class to work with a single child on an individual reading assessment. Some teachers left their rooms during the first day or two to get materials, to go to the office, etc. One teacher left her pupils three times during the first hour of the first day. A major consequence of the combination of vague or untaught rules and procedures and poor monitoring was that the children were frequently left without enough information to guide their behavior. When that occurred, the children were more likely to interact with each other,

to seek information, amusement, or diversion. In effect, the teacher had lessened her role as the classroom leader, and by default, allowed students greater freedom to define the situation. It is clear from interviews with the teachers that they did not intend to share this leadership function with their pupils. Nonetheless, it happened, primarily because the teachers did not have well-thought-out rules and procedures, communicate these to the students, nor monitor pupil behavior closely enough.

One further aspect of overall management characterized the less effective teachers: The consequences of good behavior or inappropriate behavior were not as apparent in their classrooms nor were they delivered quickly enough. Sometimes they issued general criticisms that did not focus on the particular offenders: "Some of my children are too noisy." They would frequently threaten or warn children, but then not follow through. One teacher issued "reminders," with an accumulation of

several reminders producing a letter to the parents at the end of the week. Initially effective, the "reminders" lost their impact when the teacher failed to be consistent in administering them, allowing much of the inappropriate behavior to go untended. As a consequence of the lack of follow-through on the warnings, some children tended to push at the limits, causing further problems.

It is easy to see how deficiencies in each of the areas of rules and procedures, monitoring, and delivery of consequences compound each other and produce a devastating net effect on overall organization and management. Uncertainty about teacher expectations is likely to lead to a wider range of pupil behavior, including some that is inappropriate or off-task. Unfortunately, lack of teacher vigilance allows the behavior to continue, which increases the likelihood of inconsistency in applying consequences. Children who are behaving appropriately or who want to do so will be less likely to be noticed and

reinforced, thus reducing the clarity of the rules and procedures further. Once a few weeks have elapsed, undesirable patterns of behavior and low teacher credibility became established and persist throughout the school year.

Instructional Management

Many of the instructional problems faced by the less effective teachers grew out of their difficulties in behavior management. Likewise, the instructional management of the better managers was facilitated by their good management practices. Teachers in both groups used a wide variety of approaches to both reading and mathematics instruction. Some highly individualized systems for reading instruction were operated by teachers in both groups, although grouping into three or four groups and basal instruction was the most frequent mode. In arithmetic, the range of practices was from totally individualized systems, to groups, to total class instruction. In other subject areas, large group instruction was the predominant mode.

The better managers tended to have

better procedures for instructional activities, just as they had for their overall classroom organization. They generally managed time well, with smoother, shorter transitions. Once finished with regular work, their pupils had other activities to keep them busy. These teachers had worked out systems for managing instruction that avoided problems. Thus, some students might be assigned the role of helper when the teacher was with a group. Directions and instructions were given clearly, and written on the board, and routines were established early. Directions and routines were often taught in a step-by-step format, with the teacher monitoring to verify that each step was performed appropriately. These teachers also held students accountable for their work, frequently monitoring their seatwork and keeping track of their progress on assignments. The instructional activities didn't always run like clockwork during the first three weeks, but in each teacher's class there was a sense of purpose and organization to the

activities. Evidence for instructional effectiveness also comes from the component ratings. The more effective managers were rated as more adequate in describing objectives clearly, using a variety of effective materials, having materials ready, and giving clear directions. Their activities and lessons were rated as more clearly presented, and students were generally rated as evidencing higher rates of success in the content activities.

Less effective managers' problems were often a function of their general organization. To a degree, the curriculum aided them by providing a structure to work in. The worst instances of instructional management occurred when new teachers attempted to implement individualized instruction systems. Their procedures were inadequate and, coupled with poor monitoring, produced frequent off-task behavior and occasional chaos. It should be noted that the teachers did not initiate the individualized systems; rather, they used them because other grade level

teachers at their schools had such systems. A common characteristic of these teachers was a lack of clarity in their directions for academic work, particularly seatwork. They stated instructions vaguely and did not check to see if the children understood what they were supposed to do. This resulted in off-task behavior, considerable talk with peers to find out what steps to take, and frequent interruptions of the teacher. Some of these teachers also varied their daily schedule of activities. This, along with their more poorly established procedures, ineffective monitoring, and poor delivery of consequences, resulted in a lack of predictability in these classes.

Student Concerns

An important aspect of the teacher's organization and management system is the degree to which it accommodates student concerns. We considered student concerns to be met when several conditions were satisfied. First, the classroom did not pose an apparent threat to the child's physical safety

and emotional well-being. This meant that the teacher prevented children from physical attacks on each other, deterred verbal abuse, and refrained from either. In addition, the child should have received fair treatment from the teacher, had an opportunity to be successful, and received recognition for it. This involved having enough information to make productive use of time in the classroom. Because a poorly organized classroom is likely to result in some loss of productive time, this aspect of management is linked with the preceding two areas, as the correlations among the narrative ratings also bore out.

The more effective managers seemed to have a sense of how children perceive the classroom. This is suggested by the way in which procedures were introduced and taught. The first procedures were ones related to the child's immediate needs: where to put the lunch box, how to use the bathroom, the use of certain areas in the classroom, when and where to get a drink. The initial activities

were designed to ease the child's entry back into the world of school. The organization of their classrooms made them havens of security from the sometimes rough-and-tumble school halls and neighborhood streets. The modal climate, as inferred from narratives and from observer ratings was relaxed and pleasant, but also work-oriented. Some teachers would allow occasional breaks from work, perhaps to play a record, sing, or dance. Most teachers relied on a variety of different instructional activities and assignments, along with scheduled P.E., art, and music activities to relieve the occasional tedium of the basics. Evidence that the better managers were perceived as meeting their students' concerns more effectively is also provided in the component ratings. More effective managers were rated higher in considering attention span in lesson design, in relating content to pupil interest and background, in providing reasonable work standards, and in providing activities having a high degree of pupil success.

In the less effectively managed classrooms, we judged student concerns to have been less adequately met. Although no serious problems with physical security are noted during the first three weeks, there were more incidents in these teachers' narratives of verbally aggressive behavior among the children, and a potentially dangerous incident occurs occasionally. For example, in one of the lowest SES schools, a teacher used straight pins for name tags. Several students were poked with them later in the morning. (A more effective teacher in this school used tape to secure her children's tags.)

As a group, less effective managers were as equitable in their treatment of the children as the more effective managers. Similarly, these teachers did not inflict verbal or physical abuse. However, their overall organizational style did reduce the productive time in their classes, so that they were less helpful than they might have been. In particular, they prevented their

students from developing greater independence as a result of their poor directions and procedures. By not monitoring closely enough nor stopping inappropriate behavior quickly enough, they tended to promote more off-task behavior and to increase the potential for interference with the productive time available to on-task children. Finally, these teachers didn't seem as tuned in to the needs of their children. Their initial activites seem less in touch; such as the teacher who on Day One rehearsed fire drill procedures, or another who gave a difficult math ditto within the first hour of the first morning.

Constraints, Room Arrangement

A constraint is any condition in the school, room, or environment that has the potential for interfering with the teacher's conduct of her class. The average narrative rating of constraints of the more effective managers was not different from that of the less effective managers. However, the more effective managers were judged to have better arranged rooms and to have coped

more effectively with their constraints than the less effective managers.

The range of constraints is noteworthy, and many of them were formidable. Several teachers were assigned to their school and grade level less than a week before school began, leaving little time to prepare psychologically or instructionally for the first few weeks in that setting. One teacher was assigned her room on the Thursday before the first week--and it had not even been cleaned. In some schools the teachers were frequently interrupted on the first day by late-arriving children and their parents, school office staff, custodians, other teachers, and calls over the intercom. Other constraints included missing books and supplies, smaller than usual classrooms, no air conditioning with afternoon temperatures of 95°, and the arrival of new students one or two weeks after the year began. In this latter case as many as five or six new students were added to several classrooms during Week 2 to accommodate unpredicted enrollment shifts.

The coping strategies used more effective teachers evidenced several themes. First, they had procedures for coping. For example, if new pupils were coming, helpers were appointed to acquaint them with rules and routines, and to make them feel welcome. The teacher would monitor the new students carefully at first, to get them started. In other words, a system was invoked to handle the new pupils; it was simply a part of the teacher's overall organization. By contrast, the less effective managers would welcome the children, but not supply the information about the classroom. Their new students would be left more on their own to infer the rules and procedures in an already poorly organized setting.

A second characteristic of the more effective managers is that they were more effective planners. They thought about their potential problems before the year began and made some preparations. Foreseeing a shortage of materials, they made sure they got theirs early. Anticipating a too-small

room, they moved furniture out and arranged desks to allow better movement. Finally, the teachers did not allow the constraints to interfere with the attention they gave to their students. This was most evident in the first few days of the year when, in some schools, many interruptions occurred during class time. These teachers simply would not attend to the distraction until they had the pupils involved in some activity. They rarely left the classroom, even briefly. If they had to talk with a visitor, they conversed inside the room. Thus, these teachers allowed no opportunity for diminution of their leadership role. In contrast, the less effective managers simply had poorer procedures for coping. They did much less in the way of anticipating and planning for problems and once those problems began to impinge on their instruction, they tended to be diverted. Thus, absence from the room and withdrawal into clerical and administrative tasks were routinely observed. Such behavior lessened these

teachers' roles as effective leaders in their classrooms.

Personal Characteristics of the Teachers

Differences in personal characteristics were not generally evident when the narratives from the first three weeks are searched for evidence. More effective managers were not more likely to be described as warm, enthusiastic, composed, articulate, anxious, or critical than were less effective managers. On the component ratings they were not different on the rating of distracting mannerisms.

The more effective teachers did exhibit better affective skills, receiving higher component ratings on both listening and expressing feelings. The definitions of these variables were based upon Gordon's work (8). The utility of such skills is apparent when management subcomponents include designing procedures and activities that met student concerns and communicating teacher expectations about appropriate behavior. A good listener will be able

to identify the concerns; a teacher who can express feelings will give pupils clear signals and will be more predictable.

Summary and Conclusions

The data in this study are correlational and descriptive, rather than experimental. Two groups of teachers who were very different in management effectiveness throughout a school year were identified, and antecedent behaviors and conditions were sought, through the use of extensive observations which had been made during the first three weeks of the year. A number of differences between the two groups of teachers' beginning-of-year observations were noted in all three types of data collected in the study: frequency counts of behaviors, ratings, and narrative descriptions. It is not likely that these differences are due to chance, or to selection effects in the samples, because the two groups were matched with respect to obviously biasing characteristics such as pupil entering ability levels, school, and

Title I status. Although the findings are suggestive of possible causal relationships, further correlational and experimental research are needed for verification and extension of the results. With the above reservations in mind, we feel that it is reasonable to conclude that effective classroom organization and management during the year can be predicted from the first several weeks of the school year. The teaching characteristics and behaviors that appear to discriminate best among more and less effective managers include the quality of leadership exhibited by the teacher in managing behavior and instruction, planning for student concerns, and coping with constraints. The more effective managers had a workable system of rules and procedures which they taught to their students as a primary goal of the first several weeks. They monitored their students carefully, and did not "turn them loose" without careful directions. They did not appear to treat inappropriate behavior differently than the less effective

managers, but they stopped it more quickly. Consequences of appropriate and inappropriate behavior were clearer in their classrooms and were applied more consistently. Thus these teachers established their credibility early and they were predictable.

These results are consonant with current thinking and research about organization and management (9:Ch4). For example, teacher monitoring would appear to be conceptually linked to Kounin's (10) "withitness," which he found to be related to student work involvement and freedom from deviancy. Also, we note Brophy and Putnam's (6:183) emphasis upon "pro-active teacher planning and organizing and in planning and maintaining a learning environment that minimizes the need to deal with problems in the first place."

Doyle's (7) propositions regarding the teacher's role in promoting cooperation also are supported in our first three weeks' observations, and also by the positive correlation between off-task behavior rates during the first

three weeks and the remainder of the year. Teachers who monitored behavior carefully at the beginning of the year and stopped disruptive behavior quickly were able to set and maintain deviant behavior rates at a low level.

The present study provides additional evidence of the importance of the teacher's activities at the beginning of the year. In particular we would stress the teacher's need for having an efficient system for organizing procedures, rules, and initial activities, and for treating the communication of this system to the pupils as a major teaching task at the beginning of the year. The present study suggests that such a system, augmented by the teacher's ability to monitor, to respond to pupil concerns, and to exhibit basic communication skills (both instructional and affective) will facilitate classroom management throughout the year.

References and notes

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Table 1

Beginning-of-year and Remainder-of-year

Correlations (n = 27)

Variable	r
Student Engagement Ratings	
On-task, all activities	.51
On-task, all academic activities	.46
Off-task, unsanctioned	.54
Narrative Rating Variables	
Behavior control	.83
Instructional leadership	.74
Student concerns	.68
Physical arrangements	.41
Constraints	.61
Coping with constraints	.76

Table 2

Comparisons of More and Less Effective Managers During the First Three Weeks: Component Ratings and Student Engagement Rates

Variable	More Effective (n = 7) $\bar{X}$	SD	Less Effective (n = 7) $\bar{X}$	SD	t (df = 12)	p ≤
Behavior Management						
1. Variety of rewards	4.3	1.03	3.1	.88	2.48	.05
2. Signals appropriate behavior	5.4	.70	3.8	.87	3.81	.01
3. Eye contact	6.1	.43	4.9	.81	3.54	.01
4. States desired attitudes	5.5	.79	3.9	.81	3.77	.01
5. Reinforces inattentive behavior	2.7	1.29	3.6	1.50	1.19	ns
6. Disruptive pupil behavior	3.0	1.31	4.8	1.06	2.82	.05
Responses to Disruptive Behavior						
7. Stops quickly	4.9	.70	3.5	1.03	3.10	.01
8. Criticizes	1.8	.79	2.4	1.16	1.16	ns
9. Punishes (frequency)	.6	.48	2.0	.85	1.24	ns
10. Ignores	2.9	.77	3.6	.55	1.95	.10
11. Time out (frequency)	.9	.35	1.0	.79	.35	ns
Instructional Management						
12. Describes objectives clearly	5.1	.72	3.1	.97	4.40	.01
13. Uses a variety of materials	5.6	.70	3.7	.58	5.66	.01
14. Materials are ready	6.2	.56	4.4	.84	4.62	.01
15. Materials support instruction	6.0	.57	4.3	1.07	3.55	.01
16. Clear directions	5.2	.80	3.8	.84	3.14	.01
17. Clear presentation	5.8	.59	4.1	1.26	3.22	.01
18. Provides/seeks rationale or analysis	4.9	1.07	3.4	1.13	2.48	.05

Table 2-Continued

Variable	More Effective (n = 7) $\bar{X}$	SD	Less Effective (n = 7) $\bar{X}$	SD	t (df = 12)	p ≤
Meeting Student Concerns						
19. Attention spans considered in lesson design	5.24	.70	2.8	.78	6.23	.01
20. High degree of pupil success	5.5	.63	3.9	.72	4.22	.01
21. Content related to pupil interests	5.2	.61	3.6	.45	5.99	.01
22. Reasonable work standards	5.8	.47	4.6	1.03	2.83	.05
Personal Characteristics						
23. Distracting mannerisms	1.9	.52	1.6	.32	.99	ns
24. Listening skills	5.4	.76	3.8	.67	4.30	.01
25. Expresses feelings	5.0	1.08	3.2	.22	4.41	.01
Student Engagement Rates						
26. On-task, all activities	.86	.06	.75	.09	2.72	.05
27. On-task, in content (not procedures)	.65	.06	.59	.06	1.92	.10
28. Off-task, unsanctioned	.07	.03	.16	.09	2.57	.05

Note. Except for variables 9 and 11, which are frequency counts per observation, the scores for variables 1 through 25 are average ratings made during the beginning-of-year observations. The scales range from 1 to 7, where a 1 represents little or no evidence of the rated characteristics or behavior and a 7 indicates relatively high amounts or frequent occurrences. Variables 26 through 28 are average proportions, based on frequency counts at 15-minute intervals.